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ABSTRACT

A practicum addressed the low number of parents participating with their children in a Chapter 1 Reading Program by the development and implementation of a parental involvement program. The program implemented strategies to eliminate conflicts cited by parents as major reasons for non-participation in meetings and workshops relative to their children's Chapter 1 Reading Program. These conflicts were: scheduled times of meetings, transportation needs, child care, bilingual anxiety, and literacy anxiety. Methods utilized for the 5-month practicum were multifaceted. Strategies proved successful with parental participation rising from an originally recorded 5% to 21.8%. Results indicated that the most significant outcome of the project was the positive feelings of parents toward the school, education in general, and their children in particular. The successful increase in participation was generated by the multifaceted telephonic, written, and oral communication. Appendixes include original and concluding parent surveys and a critical thinking product originated at a parent workshop. (Fourteen references are attached.) (MG)

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INCREASING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN A CHAPTER I READING PROGRAM

by

Manuel Duran Jr.

A Practicum Report

Submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Education, Nova University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science
The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Data Base System for reference.

February/1991

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ABSTRACT

Increasing Parental Involvement in a Chapter I Reading Program
Duran, Jr., Manuel 1991: Practicum Report, Nova University
The center for the Advancement of Education Descriptors: Elementary Education/Parent Participation/Parent School Relationship/Parent Teacher Cooperation/Parent Student Relationship/ Chapter I Program/Chapter I Reading/Reading/

The low number of parents participating with their children in a Chapter I Reading Program was addressed by the development and implementation of a parental involvement program. The program implemented strategies to eliminate conflicts cited by parents as major reasons for non-participation in meetings and workshops relative to their children's Chapter I Reading Program. These conflicts were: scheduled times of meetings, transportation needs, child care, bilingual anxiety and literacy anxiety. The strategies proved successful with parental participation rising from an originally recorded five percent (5%) to twenty one and eight tenths percents (21.8%). Appendices include original and concluding parent surveys and a critical thinking product originated at a parent workshop.

AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. When it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other professionals in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Sincerest appreciation and love is herewith extended to my understanding wife of nearly three decades, JoAnn; herself a professional educator, who gave up so very much these past two years so that the writer was able to pursue his graduate studies.

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CHAPTER I - PURPOSE:

The setting for this practicum is a large metropolitan school district located in the Southeastern United States. The student population is currently 122,000 and had grown by 2,000 students per year for the past three years. For nineteen years, the school district had been governed by a Federal Court Order mandating total desegregation through the use of cross-district busing. Because of the court order, the district operates 800 school buses that log over 65,000 miles per day. There are 16,000 permanent school district employees of which 8,000 are teachers.

The writer is employed as a Chapter I Reading teacher in an elementary school with a population of 1,100 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. It is a pull-out reading program for 170 students in grades two through five. Approximately half of the students in the Chapter I Reading Program are bilingual hispanics and one-fourth are blacks. The school population is forty-two percent (42%) white, thirty-five percent (35%) hispanic, eighteen percent (18%) black, and three percent (3%) Asian/Pacific or Middle Eastern.

A Chapter I Reading student attains eligibility by either scoring low in the reading section of a nationally normed

standardized achievement test or as an under-achieving bilingual student who has not been tested due to lack of English-language proficiency.

Socioeconomic status is readily identified by checking on the number of students that qualify for free or reduced lunch under Federal Government guidelines. More than half of the students are currently eligible for free or reduced lunch. This is the same criteria that is used to determine if a school is eligible for Chapter I services. The eligibility criteria was established in the 1960's as a part of President Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty program initiatives.

All schools in the district meet the standards established and required by the state department of education. In addition, all established high schools are duly accredited by the Southern Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges (SASSC). All junior high and elementary schools are thought to exceed SASSC standards as reported on district public information publications.

The goal of this project is to involve a greater number of parents in the Chapter I Reading Program at the writer's school site. Currently only five percent (5%) of the Chapter I parents are regularly participating in parent activities. The District Supervisor for Chapter I Parent Involvement recommends that there should be at least twenty-five percent (25%) participation by the

Chapter I parents. This educational improvement effort was initiated for two basic reasons. First, existing research confirms that the interaction of parents, teachers, and students proves highly successful in increasing a student's academic achievement. Secondly, the Chapter I guidelines encourages the inclusion of parents, on a meaningful level, in planning, participating in activities, and evaluating the program.

In Militta Cutright's article (1990) Parents Make The Difference, she cites five key elements of parental involvement programs that more than fifty major research studies have identified:

" . Parents' involvement increase their children's achievement.

. Parent's involvement continues to be important even when students are in high school.

. It isn't enough for parents just to be active in their children's education at home--they must participate at all levels in the schools if the schools are to be of high quality.

. Parents don't have to be well educated to help their children improve academically.

. Minority and low-income children gain most from having their parents take an active part in their schooling."

This vital partnership between home and school is a recognition of the growing concern that quality educational experiences should reflect the personal knowledge and goals of parents

together with the support and training of educators. The involvement of parents supports the view that children do better in school when their parents are not only involved and concerned about the education they are receiving, but also when they are able to communicate and consult with teachers and other school officials.

During the 1989/90 school year, the attempt to involve parents with their children fell short of the desired success. Only nine parents of the one hundred seventy Chapter I Reading Program students were actively involved and in regular contact with the Chapter I teachers. This translates into only five percent (5%) of the number of potential parent participants.

Using the Parnes Problem Solving Model (Dumas, 1990), the writer considered the problem from several view points. Brainstorming took place with the regular classroom teachers from which the Chapter I eligible students are pulled for daily time blocks of supplemental reading activities. These teachers were also having a lack of parental participation or regular communication with the same group of parents. An informational survey was sent out, to the one hundred seventy parents of Chapter I eligible students. The object of the survey was to identify conflicts that kept parents from participating more actively in Chapter I Reading activities. An anonymous solicitation was followed with return mail envelopes to assure further anonymity.

Total response was extremely high with ninety-nine (58%) of the parents responding.

The survey results were extremely revealing and are listed herewith:

SURVEY OF PARTICIPATION CONFLICTS (MAY/JUNE, 1990)

1.	Time of meeting	36 Parents
2.	Transportation	25 Parents
3.	Child care	12 Parents
4.	Bilingual Anxiety	11 Parents
5.	Literacy Anxiety	6 Parents
6.	No Conflicts (Regular Participants)	9 Parents
	Total Response	99 Parents (58%)

Since all meetings and programs for parents were in the morning, the working parent truly had difficulty participating. Only one parent, who was employed at a major bank, was allowed release time with pay to attend as a matter of corporate policy. Transportation was also a major problem. More than sixty percent (60%) of all students at school are transported to and from school by school bus. Several parents, therefore had no access to transportation and were unable to participate. The survey further pointed out the problem of child care needs of parents with pre-school age toddlers at home. A number of parents explained that they were either bilingual or of a limited educational achievement level and did not feel they could participate.

Many of these conflicts are clearly viewed, considering the broad spectrum of social and economic factors interacting within the total school population. The school district continues to be under a Federal Court Orderded integration plan that requires the cross-district transportation of inner-city minority children to elementary schools in the suburbs, where the targeted Chapter I reading students attend. The neighborhood immediately surrounding the school is predominately low to middle class Hispanic families. The third major area to supply the school population is a large subdivision of above average income families.

The writer, one of two Chapter I Reading teachers, viewed all these factors as this Practicum Internship Proposal developed. The cooperation of the second Chapter I Reading teacher was solicited and received so that the total Chapter I population would be included in the Practicum Implementation.

The outcome objectives of this Practicum Internship Proposal were to increase the parental involvement at the target school's chapter I Reading Program to a significant twenty-five percent (25%) participation by all parents of students in the program. Changes were implemented to curtail the factors reported in the conflict survey (Appendix A). Once the conflicts were resolved or reduced, it was hoped that a significant increase in parental participation, voluntarism and enthusiasm would be observed and recorded.

The goals of parent involvement outlined in the district Chapter I Program Guidelines were followed as a format to accomplish these objectives. To do this, there was a need to "...develop programs, activities and procedures which have the following goals:

1. to inform parents of participating children of the program under this chapter, the reasons for their children's participation in such programs, and the specific instructional objectives and methods of the program;

2. to support the efforts of parents, including training parents, to the maximum extent practicable, to work with their children in the home to attain the instructional objectives of the program under this chapter and to train parents and teachers to build a partnership between home and school;

3. to train teachers and other staff involved in programs under this chapter to work effectively with the parents of participating students; and

4. to consult with parents on an ongoing basis, concerning the manner in which the school and parents can better work together to achieve the program's objectives and to give parents a feeling of partnership in education of their children."

These goals are well aligned with the existing movement to restructure our public schools and to allow for decision-making at the school site itself. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development in its 1990 Issues Analysis, Public Schools of Choice, states that parental involvement is a must:

> "...active support and participation of parents and the school community are necessary for schools to achieve their purposes."

The publication further explains that:

> "...when home and schools are perceived as working together, students tend to imitate and internalize the attitudes, values, and skills of their teachers and are motivated toward academic learning. Thus, dicussions about the ways to develop parent involvement and strong collaboration between the home and school are essential..."

The objective to increase parental involvement, was considered to be extremely important upon examination of the participating students in Chapter I Programs. It was further determined that this targeted group was in critical need of support from both home and school to be successful in their quest for learning. The writer's practicum initiative brought about a significant increase in parental involvement together with an energized activity-oriented program that inspired high self-esteem and motivation in students, parents and teachers alike.

CHAPTER II - RESEARCH AND SOLUTION STRATEGY

Research of the relevant literature revealed extensive and extremely positive attitudes toward the need for parental involvement in education. While reading the research available on the topic of parental involvement in the child's educational process, one finds study after study that supports the positive values of parents and teachers working together and giving students a measurable boost in their achievement and self-esteem.

Interviews of local school district officials in the Chapter I Program were conducted and were extremely supportive of the proposed intervention. The Supervisor for Parental Involvement even provided many materials to be utilized in the implementation portion of this Practicum.

United States Department of Education Under Secretary, Dr. Ted Sanders, believes that for the first time in our history we have established education goals and parental involvement is included. In his article, Parent Involvement: An Imperative For The '90s, Sanders (1990) cites five reasons why parents nationwide must rediscover the importance of their role in the education of their children. Sanders feels that, first, parents teach best by example. Parents are without a doubt the most important

teaching influence in the child's first five years and should continue to be an integral part of their continued learning process. Secondly, he feels that parents as teachers in the home should create an environment in which learning is encouraged. High expectations should also be set by parents for their children as a third priority. Basic values is a fourth point that is developed by Sanders. Good moral values and character traits of honesty, fairness, courtesy, and good work habits are learned best from parental example. Lastly, Sanders encourages parents and teachers to stay in touch and keep abreast of their child's progress and what to do to foster learning at home.

From the Sander's article, the writer felt most assured that the need for parental involvement was vital to a child's quest for knowledge. The Chapter I Reading students targeted by this proposal are termed by school official's as children at risk. They needed to be afforded every opportunity possible to achieve and to be successful. The joint effort between home and school appeared to be a most positive vehicle in helping these students become winners at school.

The current level of parental involvement and participation in the Chapter I Reading Program was extremely low and needed to be increased. Parent participation from the past levels of five percent (5%) needed to be increased significantly to at least twenty-five percent (25%) as recommended by the District Super-

visor for Chapter I Parent Involvement. To accomplish this goal, solutions needed to be found to limit the conflicts cited on the survey results reported in Chapter I. The real problems of scheduling, transportation, child care, bilingualism, and feelings of inferiority to participate need to be addressed and alternatives considered.

In David S. Seeley's (1990) article, A New Paradigm For Parent Involvement, he reports the need for an attitude change before parental involvement can blossom:

> "Something in the basic structure of American public education is keeping parent involvement from achieving its full potential. I call this basic structural factor the 'delegation model.' It is the same rationale American society has for delegating the functions to government over the past 150 years ..."

This reliance on delegation of responsibility of education totally to the school is identified by Seeley as the source of confusion that created the fundamental gap between the family and the school. Many parents feel that they don't have to get involved with their children's education since that responsibility is thought to belong solely to the school. However, research refutes this misconception and supports the proposition that parent involvement is a necessity with home and school collaboration a must.

Florida Commissioner of Education, Betty Castor declared the 1990-91 school year as the 'Year of the Family' and the lack of

parental involvement in the past provided a challenge for implementation of a plan that increased this family involvement. The understanding is that teachers truly are members of a child's extended family. Anything a teacher does to encourage this bonding between school and home families can only yield positive results in the education of children.

Ted Sanders (1990), further states in the conclusion of his article;

> "...I believe we are entering an unprecerdented era of education growth and innovation--because among other things, I believe in the strength of the American family.

So we should, as educators, believe in this strength of family. This role of the family in the education of the child is found in the Chapter I Parental Involvement Guidelines (1989), that encourage meaningful parental participation in the education of their children. Parent involvement is a true and proven ally of educators. Whatever initiatives the teacher can utilize to encourage parents to be eager and willing participants in the education decisions that affect their child must be explored.

Much of the available data provided reasons for the lack of parental involvement. The PTA/Dodge National Parent survey, which was conducted in December 1989 and January 1990, was extremely helpful and pointed out many of the same reasons as were earlier identified as conflicts that did not allow for parent participation.

"...Seventy-two percent (72%) cited lack of time and sixty-six percent (66%) said their work schedules conflicted with school events. Twenty-four percent (24%) said they were unable to arrange child care during parent's meetings..." (Pletcher, 1990).

Research also emphasizes that educators must use all mediums available to reach parents and gain their support. David Seeley (1990) found that the most successful schools in developing parent involvement do many of the things that other schools have tried:

> "...newsletters in various languages, neighborhood communications networks, parent breakfasts, parent rooms with parent initiated activities, joint learning activities, neighborhood meetings, workshops for parents, individual conferences, etc. The difference is that these schools do more of these things, more persistently, because they are operating on a different model of schooling in which parent involvement is a necessity and the school is seen as a collaborative community learning center."

Brenda Turner (1990), editor of School Safety, reports in her article Parental Support Concerns Teachers, that Dr. Joyce Epstein, a research scientist at John Hopkins University, found interesting results in her study of two decades on how parental involvement favorably affects children's learning, their attitudes about school and their aspirations. Epstein reports:

> "The evidence is clear that parental encouragement, activities, and interest at home and participa-

> tion in schools and classrooms affect children's achievements, attitudes, and aspirations, even after socio-economic status are taken into account."

Epstein goes on to conclude that both parents and educators must realize their overlapping responsibility as an important way of improving the home/school partnership. She also emphasized that poor parents, less-educated parents, and single parents were just as influential as well-educated and high income parents.

Time and time again, the research cited similar or identical reasons for parents not participating in their children's education. Nancy Berla (1990), and her associates at the National Committee for Citizens in Education (NCCE) propose that educators must accept the realities of family life today and seek new strategies to help children learn and keep parents involved in their child's education. Berta puts forward the following scenario:

> "If you or other parents you know cannot read the school newsletter sent home in English only, if you cannot attend a 2 p.m. parent conference because you work or a 7 p.m. PTA meeting because you have no child care, you must speak up. Tell school people what you need in order to participate in school activities. Encourage your school to try something different."

The author listened to parents and initiated plans to be creative in resolving these conflicts. The role of the parent in a child's development of desire and skills to read is of paramount importance. In Linda Clary's paper (1989), Parents Teach Reading Too, she presents a current study to support the need for parents to read to their children.

"...this factor seems to be a major characteristic that distinguishes children who start to read early and remain good readers. They are read to and talked with (not to) about books! Their writing, speaking, and listening vocabularies are greater, they write better themselves, their spoken language is more complex, and their listening skills even improve. Therefore, as parents, we must let our children see us reading, and we must read to and with our youngsters each and every day!"

Nancy L Roser (1989) tells parents to get involved:

"Back-to-School Nights and Open Houses can present more discomforts than just the small chairs. Those times are designed to convey general information to a large audience, so information comes rapidly, and too often specific questions can't be asked.

Make an appointment and go back during parent-teacher conference time. Tell the teacher what you think is most important to know about your child. Then ask some specific questions and really listen to the answers. Ask how the teacher thinks you can best encourage your child's greatest strengths. You may want to know what the teacher's hopes and expectations are for your child and how the teachers is working to achieve these goals.

You may also want to know what is expected in your child's responses to homework assignments, how frequently homework is assigned, and how the reading program is organized. Your conversation should focus in a positive manner on attributes, strengths, and actions--of children, parents, and teachers.

> Knowing the curriculum helps, too. Some families love to learn along with their school children--about insects, tall tales, animal habitats, or whatever children are studying. By keeping in touch with the school and teacher throughout the year, you will know what is being taught, what is learning, and how you can help."

Kenneth Slade (1988) presented a paper to the Annual Rupertsland Regional Conference of the International Reading Association in which he outlined the need for parents to be acting members in their children's school's reading programs. A study, conducted with students in the Prince George School District of British Columbia, outlined the effectiveness of parent or significant other home reading support. The study ran for four and a half months.

The Control Group did math coaching with their mothers or significant others. This was done to neutralize the teacher variable so that neither group knew which was the control group or the experimental group. The study yielded the following:

"The results fell right into the pattern of those earlier studies in the U K:

* the experimental group recorded a greater gain in total reading achievement as measured by Gates-MacGinite T--scores than did the control group.

* there was a significant difference in post-test Gates-MacGinite reading scores for the experimental and control groups which did not exist in the pre-test scores.

* the significant difference in post-testing reading scores--for the experimental and control group cannot be attributed to I.Q. differences between the groups."

When parents learned of the results of this study by Kenneth Slade, parent support for children's reading at home was higher than ever. PTA/Home-School Nights were never so well attended as when the study was running and continued after the results were announced.

Research into procedures in establishing effective bridges from schools to parents, revealed the following seven step approach:

"1. Every aspect of the school climate is open, helpful, and friendly.

2. Communications with parents are frequent, clear, and two-way.

3. Parents are treated as collaborators in the educational process, with a strong complementary role to play in their children's school learning and behavior.

4. Parents are encouraged, both formally and informally, to comment on school policies and (on some issues) to share in the decision making.

5. The school recognizes its responsibility to forge a partnership with all families in the school, not simply those most easily available. This includes parents who work outside the home, divorced parents without custody and families of minority race and language.

6. The principal and other school administrators actively express and promote the philosophy of partnership with all families.

7. The school encourages volunteer participation from parents and the community at large" (Henderson, 1987).

Educators report that the lack of parental involvement is more damaging to education than the lack of funding for schools or the problem of disruptive student behaviors. In 1985, Benjamin Bloom conducted a study to determine why young achievers reached the top of their fields and fully realized their potential. Bloom surmised:

> "...that in nearly every case these young people had parents who believed in the work ethic, and who themselves valued and enjoyed a variety of activities that opened up fields of interest for their children. These parents, by reward and praise, transmitted their pleasure and showed continuing interest in their children's progress" (Kahn, 1987).

Leon Green, Editor of Principal magazine writes in the January 1987 issue that:

> "Many of today's parents are poorly educated products of a socio-economic system where parent involvement was sparse and even unwelcome. Other parents are recent immigrants who do not speak fluent English, and to whom the American public school is an unfamiliar and a somewhat intimidating institution."

Green further describes many circumstances where parent participation in the school is neither solicited nor wanted. This is a strange paradox since research continually supports parental involvement as positively linked with school success. Educators regularly rank parental involvement a high priority in their prescriptions for effective schools. The previously noted PTA/Dodge National Parent Survey confirmed that most parents (73%) are ready and eager to help their children. To be successful in involving parents, teachers must have great patience and persistence and use both tried and innovative approaches.

The survey findings of parent conflicts affecting their lack of participation in the writer's Chapter I Reading Program supported the following solution strategy:

1. parent meetings which are scheduled for both morning and evening sessions;

2. transportation provided for those parents requiring assistance.

3. child care provided by Chapter I Reading para-professionals or other identified community sources.

4. assurance that members of the Chapter I Reading Staff are bilingual and provide written communications in the parents language.

5. reassurance for parents that they need not be skilled in school subjects to transmit to their children the importance of attitudes that lead to serious work habits. Also, provision for parenting and literacy workshops for parents.

These five strategy initiatives addressed the needs cited in the conflicts survey. Two additional changes were also implemented to encourage parental participation. First, students, who were previously excluded from parent meetings in the past, were allowed to sit side by side with their parents. This helped confirm the team effort by allowing parents and students to participate as a family in Chapter I Reading Program activities. Second, was the establishment of specific volunteer tasks with which parents could participate. In the past, parents wanted to help. Now, parents did become involved in specific tasks

such as reading stories to small groups, recording student progress in computer assisted reading lessons, working with small groups on art projects, and establishment of a community telephone and newsletter initiative to keep all parents informed of Chapter I Reading Program activities.

CHAPTER III - METHOD

Methods utilized by the writer for implementation of the proposal were multifaceted. Consideration was given to provide resolutions for the problems noted in the parent survey (Appendix A). Parent meetings/workshops were held at the school, participation in district-wide parent meetings were encouraged for both staff and parents, and a volunteer program was developed.

The establishment of effective communication between the Chapter I Reading Program and home was of utmost importance. Each month, district newsletters were sent home with the students These newsletters contained general information about the Chapter I Programs throughout the district, provided information regarding future meetings and workshops, and also included study activities for students and parents to share at home. Chapter I Reading newsletters about the school program were also published monthly. On the school newsletter, there was always a section in Spanish advising the parents to contact either of the Chapter I Reading teachers for information since both teachers were fluent in Spanish.

The writer participated in soliciting and obtaining a substantial business partnership for the school with the data services division of a major telecommunications company. This partnership provided the Chapter I Reading Program with telephone

message capability for parents to call the school each day to hear recorded messages from their child's teachers. Each Chapter I Reading teacher had their own electronic mailbox number and recorded their daily messages in both English and Spanish.

Another need that was provided for was transportation. Arrangements were made for parents to share transportation or car-pool whenever possible. Contact was also made with a local taxi company to provide transportation, as required, during the term of this project for any parents wishing to participate in Chapter I Reading parent meetings and workshops.

Parents were encouraged to participate in the district-wide parent advisory meetings. These were scheduled throughout the project's term with meetings held in the morning and repeated in the evening to assist parents with varying schedules. School workshops and meetings were also alternated between evening and morning sessions so more parents could attend. Parents were also advised which Chapter I Reading teacher would be attending each session so they could be contacted for assistance with transportation and alleviate any anxiety about attending. The Orientation Meeting for parents was held at the school at night and the Computer Workshop for parents was held in the morning.

The parent's anxiety to attend meetings and workshops due to limited formal education or bilingualism was also addressed. Students were permitted to attend parent meetings and workshops.

The writer also provided simultaneous translation in Spanish of all English presentations. This family friendly atmosphere helped immensely in opening and keeping open communication between the Chapter I Reading staff and the parents participating. The Chapter I paraprofessionals easily provided for child care so the parents could bring their toddlers. Games and refreshments were provided each time for these small children.

The creation of groups of parents as resource volunteers to work with the Chapter I Reading students and staff was the next area of implementation. Parents were actively solicited to perform several tasks. On Fridays, parents read children's literature to small groups of Chapter I Reading students. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, parents worked with small groups of students on art projects. Wednesday's volunteer parents helped children as they worked on computers to improve their reading skills. Even some parents, who had no children in Chapter I Reading, heard about the program and also volunteered to help.

During the orientation workshop, parents were made aware of critical thinking skills which are an important part of the Chapter I Reading Program curriculum. Parents were shown the reading, thinking, and reasoning skills that are taught to the students. The Steck-Vaughn, Critical Thinking text that is used in the program was reviewed with orientation to the six skill

areas of knowing, understanding, applying, analyzing,synthesizing, and evaluating. The parents participated in an exercise using the children's menu of a local restaurant. Questions were developed by the parents as they brainstormed. The objective was to develop a self-made teaching activity to be used by the parents to help their children to think logically while analyzing the contents of the menu. A critical thinking worksheet covering several skills was developed to be used with the menu (Appendix B).

The parent Computer Workshop also addressed itself to the critical thinking skills that the children were developing by using the 1989 version of the Jostens Learning Corporation Reading Curriculum computer soft ware. Classifying, sequencing, comprehension, predicting outcomes, main idea, details and using context were all reviewed in the computer lessons that the parents did together with their children. Again, the family cooperative approach to learning was apparent and the workshop went almost two hours past it's scheduled time.

Several problems were encountered during the implementation process and these were resolved. First, there was only an average of one hundred forty (140) Chapter I Reading students at the writer's school as compared to an average of one hundred seventy (170) the year before. Since only percentages were being used this unexpected situation created little difficulty. The

second problem was that the second Chapter I Reading teacher retired unexpectedly in December. This event required the writer to devote extreme amounts of time to keep the parent enthusiasm of the second class high. Chapter I Reading parent's participation for December and January was not as successful as in September, October, and November.

The third problem occurred when the site-based management team at the school chose to delay the enhancement of the school-wide visual and performing arts curriculum until September of 1991. Thus, the writer had to delay the puppetry project that had been planned as the Chapter I Reading Program contribution to this effort. Instead, the writer joined with the music staff to produce a cultural exchange program to coincide with the visit of an ensemble from the Costa Rican National Orchestra. The bilingual Chapter I Reading parents were contacted and fifteen (15) volunteered to help make costumes from their native lands and taught the children poems and stories to recite and songs and dances to perform. This change proved most successful.

The final parent contact during the five month implementation period was the Chapter I Reading Program Parent Survey (Appendix C) which was sent out at the end of January, 1991. Results of the survey and monthly parent participation results are found in Chapter IV.

This implementation method was primarily concerned with arranging and observing parent activities and parent participation in the educational process. A log of parent participation by the categories of parent meetings/workshops, district-wide activities and special projects/volunteers was kept. A photographic study of activities was also generated to share with parents and students alike. Mid-course changes were noted as the implementation progressed and needed adjustments were made.

The promise of an exciting and productive school year for the Chapter I Reading Program came true.

CHAPTER IV - RESULTS

The results of this project proved to be an eye opening experience for not only the writer but also his principal, his mentor and his Supervisor for Parental Involvement in Chapter I Programs in the District.

Beginning in September, a total of forty-nine (49) parents participated in the Chapter I Reading Orientation Workshop. The district Supervisor for Chapter I Parental Involvement was the guest speaker. Following her presentation the writer gave a short critical thinking presentation to the parents attending. By using a children's menu from a local restaurant, the parents brainstormed several questions to ask their children from the information on the menu. The end result was an effective understanding by the parents of what is meant when we advise them that critical thinking skills are taught as a part of the Chapter I Reading curriculum. The parents expressed a realization of how important these skills can be when their children are taking tests especially the nationally normed achievement tests taken each spring. The reading scores on these tests are used as criteria of eligibility for Chapter I Reading services.

During the month of October, parent activity continued at a high level. The first District Advisory Committee meeting of

parents of Chapter I Program participants was held. Six (6) parents from the writer's school attended with one of them elected as District Parent Advisory Chairman for the 1990-91 school year. This had never happened before in the four years of the writer's participation in Chapter I Reading. In fact, in the past, it was extremely difficult to entice even one parent to attend the district-wide meetings. The position of chairman is extremely important, due to the federal enabling legislation requirement that millions of dollars in federal funds could be lost if the parents, who are represented by the chairman, do not agree with and participate in how the programs are being implemented. This year, a parent from our school will hold this responsibility and sign-off on the funding applications for Chapter I Programs.

Also in October, the volunteer parents began reading to the Chapter I Reading students every Friday. There were an average of four (4) different parents reading each week of the implementation period. The parent art volunteers also began during this time period and worked on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There were an average of three (3) parents working on the art activities each day. In the middle of October a Conference Day was held at the school. A total of twenty-three (23) parents came to conference with their child's Chapter I Reading teacher.

The month of November provided new opportunities for parental participation to take place. A Computer Awareness Workshop was held at the school in the morning. Twenty-one (21) parents attended and learned how computers were used as part of the Chapter I Reading curriculum. Of high interest were the critical thinking skills that were emphasized in the lessons to give the students a better grasp of test taking techniques. The parents, together with their children, worked on the computers. The Chapter I Program District Computer Specialist conducted the workshop with the writer simultaneously translating the presentation into Spanish.

The reading and art volunteers continued working throughout November. During American Education Week, which was also in November, the writer was asked to assist in presenting a cultural program to honor representatives of the National Orchestra of Costa Rica who would be visiting the school. Thirteen (13) parents volunteered to help make native costumes. Two (2) other parents taught poems and stories in their native language to the children and also assisted in teaching them songs and dances to perform. The program was a tremendous success with all the student body watching as Chapter I Reading students and their parents were show-cased during the program.

The month ended with a "Make and Take Workshop," conducted by the district, where parents engaged in hands-on activities to

make teaching aids to help their children with their studies at home. Eight (8) parents participated, and those parents who could not attend were sent home items and materials to make these teaching aids with their children.

In December, the Chapter I District Advisory Committee sponsored a parenting workshop that centered around the influences that the electronic media exert on young children. The five (5) parents who attended were impressed and commented to both Chapter I Reading teachers that they were truly appreciative of the high caliber of speakers that presented the program.

While conferring with the volunteer parents who were reading each Friday, the writer suggested that the group apply for a grant that was available for Chapter I Parental Involvement Projects. After much brainstorming, the decision was made to apply for the funds to purchase additional children's literature for the Chapter I Reading resource library. The choice was made that the Newberry Medal and the Coretta Scott King award winning books would be purchased if the funds were granted. The grant application proved to be successful and the funds were received and invested in the Chapter I Reading resource library.

During December, the art volunteers began working with the students in designing puppets, building a puppet stage, and painting the background scenery. The ultimate goal was to produce a puppet theater presentation that the students could

participate in and share with the other students in the school. This preparation continued through January with final production to take place in late February. The presentation was show-cased at the District Chapter I Appreciation Week in March at a local area mall.

January, as was December, was a short month. Activities for parents were limited to volunteer reading, art/puppetry volunteers, computer volunteers and a district Parent Advisory Committee sponsored parenting skills workshop entitled "Families...In Step...In Style...In Charge." Dr. Sally Kairoth, a nationally renown psychologist, was the featured speaker at the workshop luncheon. The parents were very positive about Dr. Kairoth's presentation and how it applied to their family.

In this school year there were an average of one hundred forty (140) students in the Chapter I Reading Program at the writer's school. Parental participation during the five (5) months of the practicum implementation was as follows:

September	49 parents	35%
October	36 parents	26%
November	41 parents	29%
December *	13 parents	9%
January *	14 parents	10%
Average monthly participation		21.8%

* Both months were short due to winter holidays.

Even though the goal was somewhat short of the anticipated twenty five percent (25%) increase in parent participation with only twenty one and eight tenths percent (21.8%), the project was extremely successful in that the increase represented a three hundred thirty six percent (336%) overall increase from the year before. It is anticipated that parent turn out for the puppetry presentations in February and March will exceed the number of parents that participated in the first three months of the project.

Another situation that could not be forseen by the writer was the sudden decision by the second Chapter I Reading teacher to retire in December due to health problems. This created several uncertainties and short comings that were not anticipated by the writer. This factor may also have affected enthusiasm for parental participation in December and January.

There is little doubt, after reviewing the following results of the January 1991 parent survey, that the goals of the practicum project were achieved. Eighty three (83) or fifty nine percent (59%) of the parents surveyed returned positive responses to the questions posed:

MARKING CODES

SA - Strongly Agree
A - Agree
DK - Don't Know
D - Disagree
SD - Strongly Disagree

The Chapter I Reading Program at my Childs School--

1. - encourages parent involvement through programs, workshops, and other activities.

SA	A	DK	D	SD
60	23	0	0	0

2. - has a wide range of activities for parents.

SA	A	DK	D	SD
60	23	0	0	0

3. - successfully communicates with the parents and keeps them informed.

SA	A	DK	D	SD
60	21	2	0	0

4. - uses parents and other members of the community to help with the program.

SA	A	DK	D	SD
60	21	2	0	0

5. - has parental support and parents are proud of their children's accomplishments.

SA	A	DK	D	SD
81	2	0	0	0

6. - has an "Open Door" policy where parents are welcome any time of the school day.

SA	A	DK	D	SD
63	18	2	0	0

7. - has home/school communication that is effective and two-way through the monthly newsletter and a telephonic "Compu-call" system.

SA	A	DK	D	SD
60	21	2	0	0

8. - provides for bilingual (Hispanic) family needs. (i.e. bilingual communications and simultaneous translations at workshop.)

SA	A	DK	D	SD
63	18	2	0	0

9. - makes available transportation for those parents that wish to participate in activities.

SA	A	DK	D	SD
50	23	10	0	0

10. - allows for young children to attend workshops and parent activities.

SA	A	DK	D	SD
63	18	2	0	0

11. - makes it possible for students to attend workshops and parent activities with their parents.

SA	A	DK	D	SD
63	18	2	0	0

12. - has Advisory Committee meetings in mornings and evenings to accommodate parents' varying work schedules and other obligations.

SA	A	DK	D	SD
73	8	2	0	0

13. - has provided opportunities to meet with their child's Chapter I Reading teacher.

SA	A	DK	D	SD
75	8	0	0	0

14. - has provided my child with a positive attitude toward reading.

SA	A	DK	D	SD
80	3	0	0	0

15. - has given parents a positive attitude toward the Chapter I Reading Program.

SA	A	DK	D	SD
63	18	2	0	0

The weakest response was in the transportation made available question. Ten (10) of the responding parents didn't seem to know that transportation was available for those needing assistance. The survey does reflect the understanding that meeting times were set to accommodate parent schedules. An awareness was also reflected by the respondents that their anxieties were being addressed through the child/parent joint participation in activities as well as bilingual communications and simultaneous translations during the meetings and workshops. The child care problem also appeared to be resolved with an average of five (5) toddlers attending meetings and cared for by the Chapter I Reading paraprofessional staff.

The most significant outcome of the project was the positive

feelings of parents toward the school, education in general, and their children, in particular. The successful increase in participation was generated from the multifaceted telephonic, written and oral communication. The parents, in turn, gave the writer positive response through their active participation in support of their children's Chapter I Reading educational endeavors.

CHAPTER V - RECOMMENDATIONS

The activities and strategies used by the writer in this practicum project have practical application in other Chapter I Programs seeking to increase parent involvement. The use of multifaceted communication procedures which included written, telephonic and oral techniques can be used by other schools and systems.

The need to allow for a large bilingual contingent of parents and students was extremely important with thirty five percent (35%) of the school population being hispanic. An even larger percentage of Chapter I Reading students were hispanic and accommodations were made to effectively communicate with their parents. The fact that both Chapter I Reading teachers were bilingual, English/Spanish, proved to be an invaluable resource. Written, telephonic, and oral communication was readily communicated in both languages. The large volunteer turn out for the cultural program was a natural response to the rich heritage that these parents had to share with the school community.

The fact that a taxi company could be recruited to help shows that they recognized the value of parental involvement in a child's education. The fact that the company committed to assist with transportation of parents showed that business/

school partnerships can be most effective in promoting program improvement. The partnership with the telecommunications company was also successful with Chapter I Reading parents calling an average of thirty two (32) calls each month. These calls served as additional confirmation of parent interest in the programs as well as their children's education. Another example of a successful business/school partnership was shown.

The utilization of paraprofessionals to care for the young children so parents can participate also was effective. Many of the Chapter I Migrant Programs in the district currently follow this procedure and even use parent volunteers as child care helpers.

Allowing children to attend meetings and workshops with their parents was also observed as being effective. Door prizes consisting of children's books and participation certificates given to the students encouraged them to remind their parents to attend.

A determination was made by the district Supervisor of Parental Involvement in Chapter I Programs that the practicum implementation strategy was successful. Through her active participation and observation of the project implementation she concluded that it had indeed yielded a model that can be shared with others who also want to increase parental involvement.

The strategy format can be used year after year as a blue

print for parental involvement. Many of the same strategies can be used school wide and in other Chapter I Programs district-wide. The writer plans to present a staff development presentation for other Chapter I Reading teachers within the district. The writer's experiences will be shared with other professional educators in need of similar assistance. Copies of this final report will be reproduced by the writer and distributed to Chapter I teachers during the staff development orientation scheduled at the beginning of the 1991-92 school year.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CHAPTER I READING PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENIDX A:

Chapter I Reading

Parent Questionnaire

In order to achieve an increase in parental involvement during the 1990-91 school year, we are forwarding you this questionnaire. Please answer the questions and make comments which you feel will help us with our parent involvement effort. This is an anonymous response and you should return the questionnaire in the stamped self-addressed envelope attached. Thank you for your assistance.

Chapter I Reading Staff

Please mark with an X those areas that may have created a conflict in your participating.

_____ Time of meetings (9 AM)

_____ Transportation problems

_____ Language (Bilingual)

_____ Need for childcare

_____ Had no conflicts

Other Comments:_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

CRITICAL THINKING ACTIVITY CREATED AT PARENT WORKSHOP

APPENDIX B:

CRITICAL THINKING WORKSHEET

1. For breakfast this morning, I had something that reminded me of France and the United States. What did I Have? How much did it cost?

2. For lunch, I went with the Italian entree, drank something "soft" and had something "Hot" for dessert. What did I have? How much did it cost?

3. I ate a sandwich that reminded me of my pet, drank something cool and white, and for dessert I had the least expensive item. What did I have? How much did it cost?

4. For dinner I had some poultry and potatoes, and since it was cold I drank something hot, and I had no dessert. What did I have? How much did it cost?

ANSWER KEY

1. $1.49 French Toast

2. $1.59 Spaghetti
   .75 Soft Drink
   + 1.35 Hot Fudge
   $3.69 Total

3. $1.49 Hot Dog
   .70 Milk
   1.15 Sampler Sundae
   $3.34 Total

4. $2.29 Chicken
   + .70 Hot Chocolate
   $2.99 Total

"At Wag's We Play With Our Food"

Breakfast

FRENCH TOAST 1.49
3 pieces of Texas style & syrup
With scoop of ice cream 1.85

BIG ONE 1.49
One egg, any style, strip of bacon, hash browns, toast and jelly

HOT CAKES 1.39
Three hot cakes, syrup

Sandwiches

GRILLED CHEESE 1.39
Grilled cheese with french fries

HAMBURGER 1.79
Hamburger with french fries

HOT DOG 1.49
Hot dog with french fries

Lunch & Dinner

SPAGHETTI 1.59
Spaghetti with meat sauce

CHICKEN 2.29
Deep fried chicken breast pieces with french fries

Drinks

Milk .70
Chocolate Milk .80
Soft Drinks .75
Hot Chocolate .70

Desserts

SAMPLER SUNDAE 1.15
A scoop of ice cream topped with your favorite syrup, whipped cream and chocolate shavings.

HOT FUDGE 1.35

Available for our guests ten and under.

APPENDIX C

CHAPTER I READING PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE, JANUARY 1991

APPENDIX C:

CHAPTER I READING PROGRAM

PARENT SURVEY
January 1991

MARKING CODE

SA - STRONGLY AGREE
A - AGREE
DK - DON'T KNOW
D - DISAGREE
SD - STRONGLY DISAGREE

The Chapter I Reading Program at my childs school--

		CIRCLE ONE
1.	- encourages parent involvement through programs, workshops, and other activities.	SA A DK D SD
2.	- has a wide range of activities for parents.	SA A DK D SD
3.	- successfully communicates with the parents and keeps them informed.	SA A DK D SD
4.	- uses parents and other members of the community to help with the program.	SA A DK D SD
5.	- has parental support and parents are proud of their children's accomplishments.	SD A DK D SD
6.	- has an "Open Door" policy where parents are welcome any time of the school day.	SA A DK D SD
7.	- has home/school communication that is effective and two-way through the monthly newsletter and a telephonic "Compu-call" system.	SA A DK D SD
8.	- provides for bilingual (Hispanic) family needs. (i.e. bilingual communications and simultaneous translations at workshops.)	SA A DK D SD

9. - makes available transportation for those parents that wish to participate in activities. SA A DK D SD

10. - allows for young children to attend workshops and parent activities. SA A DK D SD

11. - makes it possible for students to attend workshops and parent activities with their parents. SA A DK D SD

12. - has Advisory Committee meetings in mornings and evenings to accomodate parents' varying work schedules and other obligations. SA A DK D SD

13. - has provided opportunities to meet with their child's Chapter I Reading teacher. SA A DK D SD

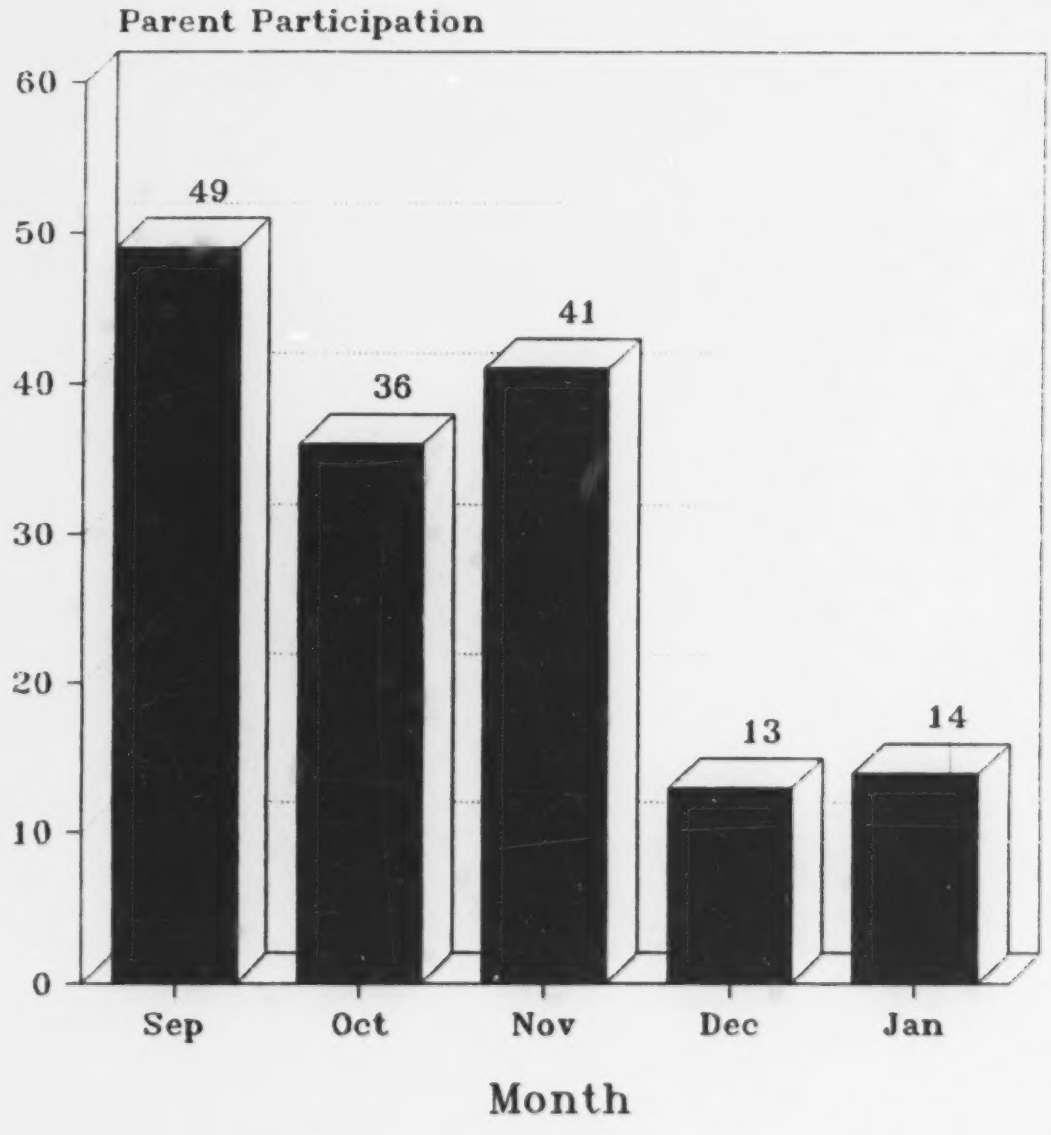
14. - has provided my child with a positive attitude toward reading. SA A DK D SD

15. - has given parents a positive attitude toward the Chapter I Reading Program. SA A DK D SD

APPENDIX D

CHAPTER I READING PARENT PARTICIPATION GRAPH

Chapter I Reading
Parent Participation Graph



* Dec and Jan – Shortened due to holiday